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Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/174 and includes information on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in that resolution.

* The present report was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/174, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventieth session a report that includes information provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the resolution.

II. Information received from Member States

A. Albania

2. Albania referred to legislation aimed at countering incitement to violence based on religion or belief. Serious threats to cause death or serious injury to someone through computer systems, due to their ethnicity, nationality, race or religion, are prohibited under article 84 (a) of the Penal Code and punishable by fine or up to three years of imprisonment. Article 265 of the Penal Code provides that inciting hate or disputes on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, as well as the intentional preparation or dissemination of writings with such content, or their preservation for the purpose of distributing them, by any means or forms, shall be punishable by 2 to 10 years of imprisonment. Article 119 (b) prohibits intentional insults based on racist or xenophobic motives through computer systems.

3. The law on protection from discrimination, which entered into force on 13 March 2010, is a legislative measure aimed to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their religion or belief, among other grounds. To ensure a more effective protection from discrimination, the law provides for the establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination as a public independent institution, responsible for providing effective protection from discrimination and any form of conduct that encourages discrimination (art. 21, para. 1). The Commissioner exercises his or her powers pursuant to the Constitution and other legal acts in force. According to the law, any person or group of persons who claims to be the victim of discrimination as defined by the law may file a lawsuit with the competent court or, depending on the case, a complaint with the organs competent for criminal prosecution.

4. Albania outlined three cases of discrimination based on religion or belief in the fields of education and employment (in relation to the wearing of religious symbols in public institutions), and one case of hate speech (a newspaper article encouraging, distributing or promoting hatred) that the Commissioner had found to be a case of discrimination based on religion or belief.

5. Albania also reported that, during the first quarter of 2015, the State police had conducted training on the topic of criminal offences inciting hatred or disputes on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

B. Argentina

6. Argentina implements international human rights standards strengthening the rights of religious minorities through public policies established by two special national entities: the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, and the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship is in charge of ensuring the rights of religious minorities, maintains the official link between the national Government and any religious organization on the Argentine territory, and administers the National Registry of Religions for the promotion and protection of those confessional communities.

7. The document entitled "Towards a national plan against discrimination in Argentina: analysis and proposals" is based on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It has been approved and was elaborated on the basis of extensive national consultations. Articles 18 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provide for the right to profess and practise one's faith, are the framework in which State agencies in Argentina implement policies and programmes to safeguard religious diversity.

8. The National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism is mandated to follow and propose various initiatives to pursue this goal. It also considers complaints by individuals and members of civil society on various types of discrimination, including anti-Semitism and islamophobia.

9. The National Institute inaugurated the Programme on Religious Diversity and Beliefs and the Forum for Religious Diversity and Beliefs. The main objective of the Forum is to safeguard diversity and ensure non-discrimination from a human rights perspective, and to address issues relevant to religious communities. A series of awareness-raising materials are being developed to promote dialogue and to sensitize the public to the right to freedom of expression and belief. Since its creation, in December 2011, the Centre for Research, Development and Training on Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Diversity, comprised of eight organizations (Asociación Cultural Armenia, Centro Islámico de la República Argentina, Delegación de Asociaciones Israelites Argentinas, Instituto Superior de Control de la Gestión Pública, Secretaría de Cultos de la Nación, Sindicatura General de la Nación, National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism, and Universidad Nacional de Lanús), promotes research and development work aimed at achieving the intercultural coexistence of various religious and cultural communities. The Centre has conducted training sessions, seminars and other activities aimed at promoting cultural diversity.

C. Azerbaijan

10. The State Committee on Religious Associations of Azerbaijan systematically carries out public awareness activities to maintain the stability of the religious situation in the country, to diffuse the possibility of the formation of radical religious groups that could lead to cases of anti-Semitism, to prevent harmful propaganda from non-traditional religions and cults, and to maintain an environment of tolerance in the country.

11. Azerbaijan reported that norms and legislation prohibiting the creation of national, racial and religious hostility with punitive sanctions are reflected in the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan, and the Law on Freedom of Religious Belief, which has been amended 15 times in the past 20 years. Those amendments were necessitated by the constant development of society and the need to bring the Law into conformity with modern requirements, eliminating legal gaps which could have paved the way for religious discrimination, religious intolerance and incitement to violence based on religion.

12. The State Committee on Religious Associations is also mandated with preventing the import of literature promoting religious extremism and non-humanist ideas, radicalism, xenophobia, all forms of discrimination and interreligious conflict. The Committee implements those measures and organizes, together with different State bodies and with the participation of religious centres, communities and representatives of different sections of society, activities aimed at the general public. It has held dozens of training seminars with urban and regional executive authorities on the topics of the position and role of religions in the struggle against terrorism and violence, religion and human rights, the modern society of Azerbaijan and religious problems, and non-traditional religions and cults. Public awareness activities have been carried out with local authorities, including in the prisons of Baku, and activities organized with the Ministry of Justice have been conducted in secondary and general education schools. The Committee has also organized events with the Office of the Ombudsman and the President's Council.

13. The Committee cooperates with international entities that fight intolerance based on national, racial and religious grounds and the prevention of negative acts stemming from such intolerance in order to share successful working methods and experiences. Azerbaijan supports interreligious dialogue and the promotion of exemplary experiences in the international arena. It hosted, for example, the World Summit of Religious Leaders, held in Baku in April 2010, organized the Baku forum on "State and religion: strengthening tolerance in a changing world", in 2012, and chaired the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on "Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue", held in Baku in 2014.

D. Costa Rica

14. The Department of Religious Education of the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica reported on concrete actions and programmes to address intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief.

15. The programmes are being developed with the participation and contribution of various denominations present in the country. To that end, a number of trainings have been conducted since 2010 to contribute to the development of teachers in their pedagogical approach, in such areas as inclusive techniques applicable to pedagogical methods used in religious education programmes. The programmes encourage the holding of small workshops on the Muslim religion, for example, during which a visit to a mosque takes place, or on carrying out pedagogical mediation strategies on the use of the Bible in religious education. Meetings with the Jewish community are also held, during which a visit of a synagogue is organized and a small workshop organized. The Department of Religious Education

works with teachers and religious educators throughout the country to ensure that their pedagogical approach to the curriculum does not exclude any student.

E. Egypt

16. Article 53 of the Constitution of Egypt of 2014 establishes an independent commission in charge of making decisions and taking the measures necessary for eliminating all forms of discrimination. The article also provides for the penalization of discrimination and incitement to hatred as a crime punishable by law, and confirms the equality of all citizens.

17. The Supreme Constitutional Court and many judicial decisions have in the past prohibited discrimination against citizens based on gender, origin, language, religion, creed, social status, political views, disability or belief.

18. Egypt reported that its National Council for Human Rights held a workshop on 25 November 2014 on a draft law on equal opportunities, non-discrimination and the establishment of a commission in the light of article 53 of the Constitution. During the workshop, the initial draft amending Decree Law No. 126 of 2011 by adding article 161 bis, to define the crime of discrimination against citizens and identify its negative manifestations and related sanctions, was presented for discussion and review, and recommendations were issued.

19. Participants in the workshop defined discrimination as any act or omission by a person, corporate or private, or employer, that deprives or aims to deprive a person of an advantage (right) provided by law and causes harm by reason of that person's religion or belief, sex, race, social or economic status, disability or of other grounds defined by law. They recommended possible sanctions, in the event of discrimination by public officials and private legal persons or employers.

20. The need to ensure non-discrimination in education, careers, promotion and training was also addressed. The Council was urged to continue consultations on the draft law, taking into account proposals from the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and the National Council for People with Disabilities, as well as suggestions from civil society organizations.

21. The participants in the workshop noted the need for clear and effective mechanisms for the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws on the ground, including the new draft law, and recommended that an office for equality and anti-discrimination be established.

22. A review of religious thoughts, cultural discourse and the educational curriculum that call for or contain concepts promoting discrimination on the grounds of sex, origin, religion and belief, social status, political affiliation or disability of all kinds was also recommended.

F. Georgia

23. Article 14 of the Constitution of Georgia guarantees the equality of all citizens. Article 38 establishes equality among the citizens of Georgia in their social, economic, cultural and political life, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, religion or language. In accordance with universally recognized principles

and rules of international law, they shall have the right to develop their culture freely, without any discrimination or interference, and to use their native language in private and in public.

24. Discrimination is defined as a criminal offence in article 142 of the Criminal Code of Georgia. The prohibition of discrimination includes acts of racial discrimination, that is any act committed for the purpose of instigating animosity or conflict on ethnic or racial grounds, as well as direct or indirect limitation of human rights based on race, skin, colour, social origin or national or ethnic identity, or to favour any individual on those grounds. Such crimes are punishable by up to three years of imprisonment. Similar acts committed through the use of force, by threatening to use force, by threatening the life or health of individuals or by using one's official position shall be punishable by up to five years of imprisonment.

25. Amendments to article 53 of the Criminal Code of Georgia adopted on 27 March 2012 strengthened the principle of non-discrimination by introducing a new paragraph stipulating that a motive indicating discrimination shall be considered as an aggravating circumstance for crimes, as defined by the Criminal Code.

26. Discrimination, stigmatization, negative stereotyping and incitement to violence are also banned by a number of other legislative acts as well as soft-law instruments regulating different spheres of public and private life, including marriage (Civil Code, art. 1153); advertising (Law on Advertising, art. 4.8); school admissions and education (Law on General Education, art. 13); higher education (Law on Higher Education, art. 4.3); labour (New Labour Code of 2010, art. 2.3); health (Law on the Protection of Health, art. 6); and the newly amended article 11 of the Law on Assembly and Manifestations.

27. Article 56.3 of the Law on Broadcasting proscribes holders of broadcasting licences from broadcasting programmes containing material that incites hatred or discrimination offensive to any person or group based on ethnic background, religion, opinion, age, gender, sexual preference or disability, or any other feature or status; and the Elections Code of Georgia, in its article 45.3, prohibits the instigation of national, ethnic or religious hatred or conflict during pre-election campaigns.

28. On 2 May 2014, the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was adopted by Parliament.

29. The Law distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination and introduces the concept of multiple discrimination, which is discrimination based on a combination of two or more characteristics. It provides for the prohibition of any form of discrimination, be it direct, indirect or multiple. Simultaneously, it stipulates that special and provisional measures aimed at encouraging equality, particularly in gender issues, shall not be considered as discriminatory. Discrimination, according to the Law, shall be prohibited in both the public and private spheres. The Law also obliges all institutions within the jurisdiction of Georgia to take concrete measures to eliminate discrimination and provides for individual redress through an independent body, the Public Defender of Georgia. This body also prepares and publishes an annual report on combating and preventing discrimination, as well as on the status of equality in the country.

G. Honduras

30. Honduras reported that, in 2013, its Congress amended section 321 of the Penal Code, which refers to protection against discrimination when an offence is committed with hatred or contempt because of the sex, gender, religion, national origin, association with indigenous people and Afro-Hondurans, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, marital status, disability, ideology or political opinion of the victim.

31. Honduras indicated that religious expressions are part of the cultural events of every people and nation and are supported through festivals, fairs and carnivals where every ethnic group is well represented and given media coverage. For example, African Heritage Month is celebrated annually to commemorate the contribution that black communities have made to Honduran society throughout their historical presence, thus spreading the customs, cuisine, dance, religion and other expressions of Afro-Hondurans in the country.

32. Similarly, the Indian Craft Training Centre emerged as part of the State's public social policy as an initiative to promote the technical skills of indigenous peoples in the western part of the country. The Executive Directorate of Culture and Arts protects the indigenous heritage by means of vocational education focused on young people, thereby allowing them to preserve their customs and traditions (religious, artistic and cultural).

33. The General Law for the Promotion of Culture provides a broad platform for enhancing the relationship between human development and the improvement of the quality of life of people. It is aimed at developing the educational system as well as the implementation of national, regional and municipal development plans, by promoting the inclusion and participation of the various ethnic communities, regardless of language or religion, thus bridging the gap between different social and ethnic classes.

34. Honduras reported that the opening of schools for indigenous peoples and people of African descent has been approved, respecting religious beliefs and cultural expressions; and teachers who are members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church are being authorized to observe Saturdays as a religious day by extending the school day from Monday to Friday in compensation. Efforts towards students who are Jehovah's Witnesses are also being made.

H. Jordan

35. The Constitution of 1952 provides for equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, language or religion, and article 16 stipulates that all Jordanians are equal before the law, without discrimination, and that they have the same rights and obligations, regardless of race, religion and language. The profession of religion and belief is guaranteed and article 14 stipulates that the State defends and protects the profession of religion and belief in conformity with the traditions of Jordan, as long as they are not contrary to the general order and morality. Moreover, rights are granted for special religious tribunals (the Council of Sharia and the tribunal for non-Muslim religions, as provided for in arts. 4, 105, 108 and 109 of the Constitution).

36. Law No. 16 of 2012 on Political Parties prohibits the constitution of a party based on religion, confession, grouping or sector, or discrimination based on gender or origin. The Law on Elections to Parliament provides for the right to vote to all Jordanians, regardless of religion or belief, and also provides in its article 32. (4) that speeches, declarations, announcements and media campaigns for electoral purposes may not cause prejudice to any candidate or other person directly or indirectly, or provoke religious, tribal, regional or racial tension. Jordan added that different religions have "legal personality", in conformity with article 50. (2) of Civil Law No. 43 of 1976. Civil Service Bylaw No. 82 of 2013 provides that public officials are subject to disciplinary measures for actions or practices reflecting bias, lack of objectivity and discrimination based on race, sex, religion or belief, or if they prejudice the political or religious opinions of the public or incite discrimination on such grounds.

37. It also reported that article 8 of Labour Law No. 8 of 1969 guarantees official holidays for religious occasions.

38. Jordan noted further that Criminal Law No. 19 of 1960 criminalizes religious offences, offences against those who profess religion and insults against the prophets of religions. A regime of sanctions of imprisonment and fines is applied to anyone who publishes in writing, pictures, depictions or slogans, or says something in public offending the religious feelings or belief of others (art. 278); intentionally bothers, interrupts or mocks those assembled within the limits of the law to profess their religion, or attacks a person in that context, without legitimate justification (art. 276); or vandalizes, destroys or desecrates burial grounds, offends those assembled for burial or destroys or desecrates places of worship or sacred places (arts. 275 and 277). A person proven to have insulted the prophets in public is liable to a term of imprisonment of one to three years (art. 273).

39. Jordan reported that any violence against persons based on race, colour, national origin or confession is considered a crime and sanctioned by Jordanian legislation. Article 150 of Criminal Law No. 16 of 1960 provides that any writing, speech, act intended to or which may provoke racial or confessional tension or incite violence between confessions or different components of the nation is punishable by a prison term of six months to three years and fines. Jordan indicated that incitement to hatred and violence, terror and racial and religious divisiveness, defamation, offence and insults are regulated in publications and journalism (arts. 7 (d) and 38 of the Law on Publications No. 8 of 1988), media, broadcasting and advertising (Law No. 71 of 2002 on Audiovisual Media and Law No. 47 of 2007, art. 6 (a)).

40. Jordan recalled the publication of the "Amman Letter" by the King of Jordan on 9 September 2004, in which the King indicated among other principles that everyone deserved dignity, regardless of colour, race and religion, and confirmed the precepts of justice in Islam concerning the treatment of others, moderation, and tolerance. Jordan also recalled the initiation by the King of the international World Interfaith Harmony Week, subsequently adopted by the General Assembly on 20 October 2010. The King of Jordan presented awards to three international recipients in honour of that Week for promoting mutual understanding and dialogue and an international culture of peace and cohesion between religions, on 20 April 2015. Jordan also highlighted the initiative entitled "Common Word", under the auspices of the Royal House of Islamic Thinking, which promotes the value of

dialogue and understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between Muslims and Christians through a common word and common ground (www.acommonword.com).

I. Kyrgyzstan

41. The Government of Kyrgyzstan stated that the State-confession relations are regulated by the Constitution, the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic, and other international and national legislative acts.

42. In November 2014, the Concept of Public Policy in the Sphere of Religion in the Kyrgyz Republic (2014-2020) was approved by presidential decree. One of the objectives of the Concept Policy is to create tolerance and interconfessional esteem. The working group drafting the Concept Policy consisted of representatives of the Muslim community (the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan), the Christian community (the Russian Orthodox Church), Evangelical Christian Baptists, religious scholars, theologians and public officials. It is stated in the Concept Policy that religious communities in the country carry out their activities in accordance with the law of Kyrgyzstan and that the State ensures equal treatment to all confessions. State and religious organizations cooperate in the social, cultural, educational, philanthropic and economic spheres, as well as on such issues as public security and the prevention of extremism.

43. During 2014 and 2015, the State Agency for Religious Affairs organized more than 30 events dedicated to human rights and the rule of law issues, aimed at strengthening interreligious understanding and respect for religions and religious values.

44. Kyrgyzstan reported that, in accordance with its Constitution, articles 7, 16, 20 and 32, religion and all faiths shall be separated from the State. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, language, invalidity, ethnicity, religion, age, political or other opinion, education, origin, national or social status or any other similar criteria. Everyone is granted the right to freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of practice of faith and religion, freedom to have a religion or not, and freedom to abandon or change religion. The Constitution prohibits propaganda promoting national, racial or religious hatred, and concepts of social or gender superiority inciting discrimination, hatred and violence.

J. Paraguay

45. Paraguay stated that article 24 of its Constitution guarantees religious and ideological freedom.

46. The Vice-Ministry of Worship, under the Ministry of Education and Culture, established in accordance with General Law of Education No. 1264/08, article 24 of the Constitution and the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture, is designated as the official registrar of churches and religious and philosophical entities in the country, and carries out a series of activities to promote respect among those.

47. The Permanent Forum of Interreligious Dialogue of Paraguay, created by ministerial resolution 28561/11, is aimed at interreligious cooperation and promotes

the diversity of belief, dogma and philosophies that exist in the country. It organizes periodic meetings, as well as national and international conferences, seminars, expert meetings and consultative forums, with the participation and involvement of religious and philosophical communities and the educational community in general.

48. Paraguay reported that the Directorate of Curriculum of the Ministry of Education has worked on the issue of non-discrimination in the national curriculum, at all levels (i.e. in initial education, basic education, secondary education and youth and adult education). The Directorate undertakes substantive knowledge analysis, interpretation and evaluation of content related to non-discrimination and has been developing topics for projects that allow citizens to embody that value in their daily lives.

K. Russian Federation

49. The Russian Federation stated that the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess, individually or with others, any religion or no religion, to freely choose, possess or disseminate religions or beliefs and to act in conformity with them, are guaranteed by the Constitution. Propaganda and agitation, inciting social, racial, national and religious hatred and hostility are impermissible. Propaganda promoting exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of an individual on the grounds of social, racial, national, religious or linguistic affiliations is prohibited.

50. The legislation of the Russian Federation provides for the application of a wide spectrum of criminal and administrative measures and responsibilities for acts of extremism. Article 5.62 of the Code of Administrative Offences is one of the main tools for protecting citizens from discrimination based on religious and national grounds. The Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for different types of discrimination, such as the violation of rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of an individual on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, financial or official status, membership of public associations or any social groups, if such acts were committed by a person through his or her official position (art. 136), and the illegal obstruction of the activities of religious organizations or of the performance of religious rites (art. 148). Discrimination based on religion or belief is considered as a form of extremist activity in the Russian Federation.

51. The Russian Criminal Code has been amended to fight violence committed on racial, national and religious grounds (Federal Law No. 211-FL of 24 July 2007 on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation in Connection with the Improvement of State Administration in the Area of Countering Extremism, as amended on 22 February 2014).

52. The Russian Federation noted the increase of Internet and social networks usage by terrorist groups for extremist propaganda. Since February 2014, according to the Federal Law No. 149-FL, article 15.3, of 27 July 2006 on Information, Information Technologies and Information Protection, as amended on 24 November 2014, at the request of the General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation, access to Internet sources containing appeals for unrest and other extremist information has been limited. The Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecommunications, Information Technologies and Mass Communications may block access to Internet sources.

53. The Federal Agency for Nationality Affairs was created pursuant to presidential decree No. 168 of 31 March 2015. The Agency is in charge of developing and implementing the State national policy, strengthening the unity of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, and protecting the rights of national minorities and the indigenous peoples of Russia. The Agency is authorized to take actions to prevent any form of discrimination on racial, national, religious or linguistic grounds, as well as any act intended to incite hatred, enmity or hostility.

L. Serbia

54. Serbia reported that the Office for Human and Minority Rights coordinated the process of drafting the Strategy of Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, adopted in June 2013. The process was initiated by the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, at the initiative of civil society organizations, and carried out with broad participation. The Strategy focuses on the promotion of the situation of nine vulnerable groups in Serbia (ethnic minorities, religious communities and groups, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, people with disabilities, the elderly, children, refugees, and internally displaced persons and migrant groups), as well as persons whose health status may be grounds for discrimination. Serbia noted that those social groups are particularly vulnerable to the negative aspects of globalization, particularly poverty.

55. Serbia noted that an action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the period from 2014 to 2018, adopted in October 2014, defined the anti-discriminatory policy of the Government. Carrying out the action plan and implementing the envisaged measures shall contribute to progress with regard to respecting and promoting human rights, fostering tolerance in society, accepting diversity, respecting the principle of equality and conflict prevention, with the aim to reduce the overall level of discrimination in Serbia. The action plan covers general areas, such as public administration and non-discrimination, the police, security and the judiciary, and specific areas, such as education and professional training; labour and employment; marriage, family relationships and inheritance; health care, health and social protection and housing; youth, sport, culture and media; and regional development and local self-government. A mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the action plan is currently being developed (http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/rs/category/dokumenta/).

56. The Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in Serbia created in September 2014 defines a methodological framework for monitoring the quality of inclusive education, giving an insight into the current state of inclusive education, and proposes mechanisms for its correction and promotion.

M. Singapore

57. Singapore stated that, in application of the principles of meritocracy, secularism and multiracialism, the framework for the maintenance of social cohesion includes article 12 of the Constitution, which states that there shall be no discrimination against citizens of Singapore based on religion, race, descent or the place of birth. There are also legislative safeguards, which, through the legislative

process, ensure that no ethnic or religious community in Singapore is allowed to infringe on the rights of other communities.

58. The Presidential Council for Minority Rights, established in 1973, scrutinizes legislation passed by Parliament to ensure that bills do not provide grounds for discrimination against any ethnic or religious community. The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, which came into force in 1992, is aimed at maintaining religious harmony and ensuring that religion is not exploited for any political or subversive purpose in Singapore.

59. Singapore added that, under section 4 (1) of the Sedition Act (chap. 290), it is an offence to commit, attempt to commit, make any preparation to commit, or conspire with any person to commit any act that has a seditious tendency, including the tendency to promote feelings of ill will and hostility among different races.

60. The ethnic integration policy guides the population of each ethnic group in every public housing estate so as to mirror the ethnic composition of the national population. This policy prevents the formation of ethnic enclaves, so that residents have the opportunity to befriend fellow Singaporeans in daily life. The national service, or the compulsory military service for all Singaporean men at the age of 18, creates many opportunities for young men of different races and religions to interact, bond and work together and therefore to foster strong relationships and trust.

61. Article 152 of the Constitution states that it is the responsibility of the Government to care for interests of racial and religious minorities in Singapore, and the Government uses existing mechanisms to consult those minorities on policies that might affect them.

62. Singapore added that the Community Engagement Programme was introduced in February 2006 to build closer ties across groups. It creates a community response framework in which community leaders can be mobilized to help to maintain social and psychological resilience in the aftermath of a crisis with racial or religious overtones. Under the Programme, the National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony provides a national platform for ethnic, religious, community and government leaders to engage with one another, to build networks of trust and to formulate strategies to strengthen community interactions.

63. There is also a Harmony Fund, established in 2013, to raise awareness of the importance of racial and religious tolerance and understanding, promote appreciation of different cultural practices, deepen interaction among different racial or religious groups and reduce negative stereotypes or misconceptions about other communities. The Fund encourages grass-roots initiatives and has supported major events that foster interfaith and interracial harmony, such as the annual Harmony Games.

N. Trinidad and Tobago

64. Trinidad and Tobago reported that section 4 of its Constitution of 1976 guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to be protected and enjoyed without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex. Section 14 of the Constitution states that, where any person alleges that such rights have been, are being or are likely to be contravened in relation to him or her, that person may apply to the High Court for redress.

65. The Equal Opportunity Act of 2000 seeks to protect persons against discrimination in relation to employment, education and the provision of goods, services and accommodation. Under the Act, citizens are entitled to equality and fair treatment, regardless of their status (i.e. their sex, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, marital status or any disability). Section 26 of the Act establishes the Equal Opportunity Commission, which seeks to promote equality of opportunity and good relations among persons of different status generally, and receives and investigates allegations of discrimination, facilitating as far as possible, conciliation between the parties concerned.

66. Section 3 of the Malicious Damage Act of 1925 states that any person who unlawfully and maliciously sets fire to any church, chapel, meeting house or other place of divine worship is liable to imprisonment for life. Sections 96 and 96 A of the Summary Offences Act of 1921 make it an offence to disturb places of worship, including disturbing or abusing a religious head or official celebrating a religious rite. In addition, any person who brings into contempt or disbelief or who attacks, ridicules or vilifies another person's religion in a manner that is likely to provoke a breach of the peace commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand Singapore dollars.

67. In relation to admissions to public schools, the Education Act of 1996 prohibits discrimination on the ground of religion. Section 7 of the Act states that no person shall be refused admission to any public school on account of the religious persuasion, race, social status or language of that person or of that person's parents.

68. The purpose of the Sedition Act of 1920 is to eliminate the possibility of any action that inflicts harm or discomfort to an identifiable group. It aims to prevent the incitement to violence against a target group (including a religious group) based on discrimination. Penalties for offences under that Act include fines and imprisonment upon indictment.

69. Trinidad and Tobago reported that community festivals, celebrations at government offices and schools as well as street celebrations take place, and national festivals include the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Eid al-Fitr and Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day.

70. Religious instruction is permitted and encouraged in public schools. Time is allocated each week to religious instruction, attendance to which is voluntary, and the religious groups represented are diverse.

O. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

71. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland continues its work to tackle hate crime through national actions plans. In 2014, the Government conducted a review of its actions under three core principles: (a) developing the evidence base on hate crime by improving police recording of hate crimes with regard to disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender identity; (b) strengthening its strong legal framework; and (c) investing direct funding support to professionals at the frontline, to voluntary sector organizations and to victims of hate crime.

72. The Government is working on facilitating reporting on hate crime online, through its hate crime web facility named True Vision, which receives approximately

10,000 visits a month and received 3,641 reports in 2013-14. Public communications are used with the aim of reassuring the public that perpetrators of hate crimes will be punished with the full force of the law.

73. The United Kingdom stated that one challenge that has continued to evolve is the task of removing hate material from mass media channels, such as the Internet, while protecting freedom of expression. The Government is working with the police and the Hate Crime Independent Advisory Group to build relationships with leading social media providers and to improve their response to offensive and illegal hate-related content available online, including through support to the international Working Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism. This Group has brought leading social media companies together with politicians, civil society representatives, academics and subject experts to find collaborative solutions to reduce the harm caused by hate propaganda on the Internet by placing the companies at the heart of the solutions and by seeking to work within the diverse global legislative frameworks. The Government is also working more closely internally to ensure linkages between policy and operational areas where there are cross-cutting issues relating to online crime, for example by establishing links with online extremism.

74. The Director for Public Prosecutions has also published guidelines for prosecuting cases involving social media communications, including hate crimes. These guidelines provide clarity to prosecutors and the police on the criminal thresholds for prosecutions.

75. The United Kingdom reported that police forces across the country continue to work closely with Muslim communities and organizations to provide reassurance, security measures and safety advice. In some areas, 24-hour police patrols have been put in place to safeguard high-profile premises.

76. The Cross-Government Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred has extended its relationship with international organizations to work on a definition of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia, and ways of addressing hatred on the Internet. The Community Security Trust, a Jewish organization with extensive experience in reporting anti-Semitic hate crime, has continued to assist the charity Faith Matters and its "Tell MAMA" reporting programme in further developing its data collection system.

77. A number of projects have taken place or are under way, including: (a) Tell MAMA, the first third-party reporting service to record incidents and support victims of anti-Muslim hatred; (b) the hosting of Srebrenica Memorial Day; and (c) social media workshops supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government aimed at countering hatred online.

78. The United Kingdom also reported that it continued to strongly support work in international organizations to combat anti-Semitism. The Cross-Government Working Group on Anti-Semitism continued to provide important opportunities for joint long-term efforts between the Government and the Jewish community to discuss and tackle anti-Semitism.

79. The United Kingdom plays a leading role in the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in relation to the Berlin Declaration to combat hate crime, including anti-Semitic hate crime, and was represented at ministerial level at the event held in November 2014 to mark the tenth anniversary

of the Berlin Declaration. It also actively participates in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

80. Recognizing the importance of providing guidance to law enforcement agencies on how to deal with anti-Semitic incidents, the College of Policing of the United Kingdom recently published a new manual on hate crime.

81. The United Kingdom chaired the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance between February 2014 and March 2015, during which it hosted a week-long series of meetings in London, and then again in Manchester. It has worked to ensure that the Alliance's Committee on Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial, in which non-governmental organizations from the United Kingdom play a key role, meet regularly. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries to submit a report under the Alliance's new country reporting system.

P. United States of America

82. The United States of America reported that the first amendment to its Constitution provides that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech. This amendment is made applicable to state and local governments by the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution. Freedom of thought and conscience is protected by the guarantee of freedom of speech and opinion. Federal government action that substantially burdens religious exercise may be invalidated by the judiciary unless the action is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest (www.justice.gov).

83. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on religion in education, employment, housing, public accommodations and access to public facilities (Civil Rights Act of 1964). The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice enforces those statutes and has established a position of Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination to coordinate cases involving religion-based discrimination among the various sections of the Division and to oversee outreach efforts to religious communities. Citizens who believe that their rights to religious freedom have been violated or that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their religion may contact the Civil Rights Division using toll-free numbers. The Division has also actively enforced the land-use provisions of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, enacted in 2000, which protects houses of worship from discriminatory or unjustifiably burdensome zoning regulation.

84. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigates allegations of religious discrimination in employment and occasionally files lawsuits to protect the rights of those who are harmed. Workers may also file their own lawsuits.

85. The Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice works on engagement with members of diverse communities, encouraging the creation of collaborative networks and creating mechanisms to work with different communities with regard to potential areas of conflict on those issues. The Service is available to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to help to prevent and resolve racial and ethnic conflict and to employ strategies to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes, and it has developed a set of best practices. With regard to church burnings, the Service has worked directly with hundreds of rural, suburban

and urban governments to help to eliminate racial distrust and polarization, promoted multiracial programmes, conducted race-relations training for community leaders and law enforcement officers, conducted community dialogues, and provided assistance to bring together law enforcement agencies and members of minority neighbourhoods. The Service has also responded to reports of vandalism and arson involving mosques and Sikh gurdwaras, and has brought Arab, Muslim and Sikh students and parents together with local law enforcement, government and school officials to address allegations of discrimination and harassment in schools through cultural professionalism programmes and the Service's programme entitled "Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together".

86. The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of the Department of Homeland Security conducts regular community leader round tables in eight cities, youth round tables around the country and trainings for law enforcement personnel and intelligence analysts.

87. With respect to paragraph 9 of resolution 69/174, it is a federal crime to commit arson or vandalism against religious real property, including houses of worship, because of the religious nature of the property.

88. The President and other senior officials have embraced their role in speaking out against intolerance, and there are efforts promoting interfaith dialogue and unity in the United States, which have been effective in response to various incidents of intolerance, providing a demonstration of unity and tolerance in the face of hatred. Civil society leaders, including religious leaders, regularly speak out against intolerance.

89. The United States also engages in international efforts to foster a global dialogue. Since hosting an expert-level meeting on implementing Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 in Washington, D.C., in December 2011, a country-to-country workshop programme has been developed to explore best practices in implementing the resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Indonesia, and additional programmes are planned.

Q. Uruguay

90. Uruguay reported that articles contained in its Constitution and legislative rules governing those issues, as well as institutional mechanisms, including the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination, created by Law No. 17.817 of 6 September 2004, play a key role. The Constitution provides in article 8 that all persons are equal before the law, no other distinctions being recognized among them save those of talent and virtue. With regard to religious matters, article 5 provides that all religious sects are free in Uruguay, that the State does not hold any religion and that states shall exempt from all taxes temples dedicated to religious worship. In Law No. 17.817, the fight against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination is declared of national interest and article 4 states that the aim of the Honorary Commission is to propose national policies and practical measures, including affirmative action rules, to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

91. The mandate of the Honorary Commission include designing and implementing educational campaigns aimed at the preservation of social, cultural and religious

pluralism, the elimination of racist, xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes and respect for diversity (art. 5. D); receiving and centralizing information on racist, xenophobic and discriminatory behaviour, compiling that information and filing appropriate judicial complaints, as necessary (art. 5. G); providing a comprehensive service and free advice to individuals or groups that feel discriminated against or that they are the victims of racist, xenophobic and discriminatory behaviour (art. 5. I); and informing the public about racist, xenophobic and discriminatory behaviours that may manifest themselves in any area of national life, especially education, health care, social welfare and employment, whether from public authorities or private persons or entities (art. 5. K).

92. Uruguay reported that the Commission also carried out activities such as promoting visits to museums and sites of significance to different religions and sects; organizing talks in schools on the subject; promoting joint activities among people and groups involved in allegations of discriminatory attitudes; and educating and raising awareness on genocides, with the participation of Holocaust survivors and members of the local Armenian community.

93. The month of September has been declared the Month of Religious Tolerance, which gives the opportunity to conduct an awareness campaign and acts in favour of tolerance and respect among different religions, with the involvement of various religious leaders.

III. Conclusions

94. **States continue to take steps to implement the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of resolution 69/174, which are primarily policy-oriented or legal in nature. All reporting States have constitutional provisions concerning freedom of religion and belief and have enacted or are in the process of enacting or amending domestic legislation, criminal codes and civil laws in order to protect against discrimination and violence based on religion or belief. Discrimination is prohibited by law in several sectors, such as labour and employment, housing, health care, accommodation and education, and is governed by federal laws and specific legislation providing for legal redress to victims and sanction of offenders, once proven.**

95. **A number of States are working to address hate crimes at the domestic level. Advocacy of incitement to hatred is for the most part criminalized and often prohibited on several grounds, including those of religion or belief. It was also noted that freedom of expression and opinion was important to counter religious intolerance, including hate speech.**

96. **Some States are undertaking national and international initiatives to combat incitement to hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance on the Internet, and to address the role of the media in combating hate speech, xenophobia and related intolerance, including on the Internet. The Internet was generally identified as a medium for hate speech and hate crimes. However, it is also being used as a means to combat discrimination on the basis of religion and belief, as it presents a forum for exchange, expression, dialogue, education, knowledge management and information-sharing between and among networks, security officials, governments and communities.**

97. States reported that, generally, there is religious freedom and pluralism domestically and that members of religious groups and communities are able to manifest their religion and contribute openly and on an equal footing to society. That religious freedom is often guaranteed by constitutional regimes and law, as long as it is in compliance with domestic law. Several responses noted that extremism and radicalization, often leading to hate crimes and violence, were being addressed through social cohesion and integration programmes, police and security responses, often coupled with regular engagement and interaction with religious leaders, local communities and young people, as well as data gathering and monitoring.

98. Almost all countries provide for one or more channels or some form of communication and consultation among religious groups and communities and the governmental authorities. Numerous practical examples were forwarded about communication bodies or forums between State institutions and religious groups or communities, with regard to policing and security matters, or as general forums of exchange. A number of States are involved in networks comprised of civil society, government officials, police and representatives of religious communities, among others. National institutions, commissions, public defenders, ombudspersons and others, through varying mandates, play important roles in combating intolerance based on religion and belief in various national contexts.

99. Religious intolerance, stigmatization, negative stereotyping and discrimination, in particular, are addressed through public information and media campaigns and through educational measures. States are also funding local and national projects aimed at increasing capacity-building, social cohesion, interfaith dialogue and the participation of religious groups and communities.

100. Some States reported that there were legal protections in place and that they were taking measures and adopting policies to promote the full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and that they were taking protective measures in cases where those were vulnerable to vandalism or destruction.

101. The importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue was underlined in several submissions. Interfaith dialogue is taking place at the local, national and regional levels, and many States support such initiatives financially. States are also actively involved in interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the international level.